NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

OFFICE OF **CHALLENGE GRANTS**

HUMANITIES ACCESS GRANTS

Deadline: May 4, 2016

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.130

Questions?

Contact the staff of NEH's Office of Challenge Grants at 202-606-8309 or at challenge@neh.gov. Hearing-impaired applicants can contact NEH via TDD at 1-866-372-2930.

Submission via Grants.gov

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. NEH strongly recommends and that you complete or verify your Grants.gov registration at least two weeks before the application deadline, since it takes time to process your registration.

System for Award Management Entity records

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, an applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM). You must therefore review and update the information in your organization's Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your organization's information or another award term. In order for your organization to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award, or receive payment on an award, the information in its Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record here. You may need a new SAM User Account to register your organization or update its Entity record. NEH strongly recommends that applicants update (or, if necessary, create) their SAM Entity records at least four weeks before the application deadline.

I. Program Description

Humanities Access grants help support capacity building for humanities programs that benefit one or more of the following groups: **youth, communities of color, and economically disadvantaged populations**.

Humanities Access grants establish or augment **term endowments** (that is, endowments whose funds are entirely expended over the course of a set time period) to provide funding for existing programs at institutions such as public libraries, local and regional museums, historical societies, community colleges, HBCUs and tribal colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions, archival repositories, and other cultural organizations. Humanities Access grants are intended to seed longer-term endowment-building efforts.

Programs supported by Humanities Access grants might include, for example

- a summer project for teens at a local historical society;
- internships for Native American students at a tribal museum; or
- a Clemente course at a homeless shelter organized by a community college.

Humanities Access Grants offer **two years of match-based funding to be expended through a term endowment over the final three years of the five-year grant period**. Humanities Access grant funds should not be used to replace existing program funds. Instead, the grant should expand or enhance an existing exemplary humanities program.

Institutions that have never received an NEH grant and small to mid-sized institutions are especially encouraged to apply.

Activities supported

As noted above, Humanities Access grants support humanities programs—that is, programs that seek to understand and explain the significance of what people have thought, done, and achieved, both in the past and in our time. To be a bit more specific, humanities fields explore topics like these: the philosophy, literature, art, and music that people create; the battles that they fight; the polities and societies in which they live; the social forces that unite and divide them; the work that they do; and the religions in which they believe. Humanities fields approach topics like these primarily by means of qualitative (interpretive, critical, speculative, historical) methods rather than exclusively by means of quantitative methods.

You can find a list of some of the humanities fields (the list is not comprehensive) in the legislation that created the National Endowment for the Humanities (the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, 1965): "The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."

Institutions may use federal Humanities Access grant funds, combined with the required matching amount, to create or add to a term endowment fund. Award recipients might use this fund to support ongoing humanities programmatic costs such as the following:

- salaries and benefits for humanities personnel;
- acquisitions for collections;
- public programming and outreach expenses;
- lecture or exhibition series;
- media or digitization costs;
- faculty, teacher, and staff development;
- research fellowships;[1]
- visiting researchers, scholars, or consultants;
- programs for preserving and conserving collections; or
- strengthening the technological infrastructure for humanities projects.

Note, though, that activities like these are eligible for support only if they benefit one or more of the following groups: youth, communities of color, and economically disadvantaged populations.

Expenditures not eligible for support

Humanities Access grant funds, federal or nonfederal, may not be used for

- construction or renovation of facilities;
- programs that seek to promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view;
- programs that advocate social action; or
- programs designed for activities outside the scope of the humanities, such as the creation of art works, the performing arts, science education, non-humanistic aspects of the social sciences, or public policy advocacy. Projects that deal with the visual or performing arts

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[1] Applicants proposing to fund fellowships with a Humanities Access grant must ensure the fair and informed selection of fellowship recipients by relying on the recommendations of an external committee composed of qualified humanities scholars drawn from outside the institution's staff and governing bodies. The committee should meet in person or virtually, and all members should be replaced each year. NEH recommends a committee of five; three is the minimum.

Grantee institutions are responsible for avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest in the composition of the selection committee and its deliberations. Staff, officers, board members, and trustees of the institution may not serve as voting members on committees that review applications for fellowship awards funded by Humanities Access grants. The same restrictions apply to staff, officers, and trustees of parent organizations.

are eligible for Humanities Access grant funding only if they enhance the interpretation or analysis of the artistic form in question, using critical, historical, theoretical, or other humanities perspectives. Projects in the social sciences must use humanistic (qualitative) methods.

Special encouragement

In accordance with Executive Order 13532 on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (**HBCUs**) and Executive Order 13592 on **Tribal Colleges and Universities**, NEH especially welcomes grant applications from these institutions, as well as from **Hispanic-serving institutions**. NEH also welcomes applications from **two-year colleges**, as well as from organizations working with **veterans**. Potential applicants from such institutions are urged to discuss with program staff ways in which grant funding can help them meet their institution's particular needs and capacities in the humanities.

The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square

NEH welcomes proposals related to its new initiative, The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square. This initiative seeks to connect the study of the humanities to the current conditions of national life. Many of today's challenges require more than ever the forms of understanding and knowledge represented by the humanities. They require the broadest possible engagement of scholars and the public with the resources of the humanities, including but not limited to the study of language, literature, history, philosophy, comparative religion, and ethics. The study of the humanities can help illuminate the complexity of many contemporary challenges while enriching our understanding of the common good.

Note that the Common Good initiative incorporates the Standing Together initiative, which encourages projects related to war and military service.

More information about the Common Good initiative is available here.

NEH will give equal consideration to all applications in accordance with the program's evaluation criteria, whether or not they respond to the Common Good initiative or the Standing Together initiative.

II. Award Information

NEH will offer successful applicants a one-to-one matching grant of either $50,000 or $100,000 divided evenly over two years. The grant amount that applicants request should be appropriate to the humanities needs and the fundraising capacity of the institution.

Successful applicants must raise contributions from third parties and have them certified before NEH will release the grant funds to the grantee (see NEH's Federal Matching Funds Guidelines).

As a guide, these are the year-by-year breakdowns:

	Year 1	Year 2	Final
NEH	$25,000	$25,000	$50,000
Match	$25,000	$25,000	$50,000
Combined	$50,000	$50,000	$100,000

	Year 1	Year 2	Final
NEH	$50,000	$50,000	$100,000
Match	$50,000	$50,000	$100,000
Combined	$100,000	$100,000	$200,000

If sufficient donations are not raised in any given year, the federal offer for that year may have to be forfeited. The forfeiture of some or all federal funds in any given year proportionately reduces the total matching requirement.

The Humanities Access grant period begins May 1, 2016 and ends September 30, 2021. Annual certification of gifts is due no later than May 1, 2017; and May 1, 2018.

III. Eligibility

Any U.S. nonprofit institution (public agency, private nonprofit organization, federally recognized Indian tribal government) working wholly or in part with the humanities may apply for a Humanities Access grant. Institutions that are part of a larger institution (for example, a university museum) should consult with NEH staff on questions of separate eligibility.

NEH generally does not award grants to other federal entities or to applicants whose projects are so closely intertwined with a federal entity that the project takes on characteristics of the federal entity's own authorized activities. This does not preclude applicants from using grant funds from, or sites and materials controlled by, other federal entities in their projects.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Grantees may not use funds from other federal entities to match NEH grants.

Institutions may apply for only one Humanities Access grant in a calendar year.

Applicants to the Humanities Access Grants program may also apply for and receive grants from the Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning and Implementation Grants programs, as well as the Creating Humanities Communities Grants program.

Current recipients of regular Challenge Grants are not eligible to apply to the Humanities Access Grants program until three fiscal years after the end of their grants. Current recipients of Challenge Grants for Two-Year Colleges are not eligible to apply to the Humanities Access Grants program until one fiscal year after the end of their grants.

NEH will not review late, incomplete, or ineligible applications.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Application advice

You are welcome to contact the Office of Challenge Grants to seek advice about preparing the proposal. **Draft proposals are not required, but you are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this preliminary review.** A draft should include the full narrative section of the application and the proposed budget; prospective applicants should send the draft directly by e-mail attachment to challenge@neh.gov. Please submit this document no later than April 6, 2016. NEH staff may not be able to review drafts submitted after this date.

Staff comments on draft proposals are not part of the formal review process and have no bearing on the final outcome of the application. Once NEH has received a formal application, the staff will not comment on its status except with respect to questions of completeness or eligibility.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

You must submit your application to Grants.gov.

The application consists of a narrative, a budget, the project director's biography and (if appropriate) job descriptions for positions to be created as a result of the grant, letters of commitment and support, and supplementary materials. The font size should be no smaller than eleven-point. All pages should have at least one-inch margins, be collated, and numbered consecutively throughout.

1. **Narrative**

Narrative descriptions are limited to **five single-spaced pages**. Your application should be free of jargon and accessible to nonspecialists.

In the narrative, you should address the following points in this order:

- o Describe the humanities activity or program that the grant would support, including its genesis, history, and goals. Include evidence of the program's significant humanities content and intellectual value.

- o Discuss the connection between the humanities activities and the needs and capacities of one or more of the following groups: youth, communities of color, or economically disadvantaged populations. Include information about previous efforts by your institution to reach and serve these groups. If the proposal relates to the NEH Common Good and/or Standing Together initiative, explain its relevance in this portion of the narrative.

- o Explain how the institution, through its mission, personnel, governance, facilities, and resources, has been and will be capable of sustaining outstanding humanities activities over the long term. Identify any collaborators or partners.

- o Describe the institution's fundraising strategy to achieve the required match in the first two years of the grant, and delineate clearly and in detail the planned grant expenditures (federal and nonfederal combined) in years three to five.

- o Provide a plan for assessing and measuring, in both qualitative and quantitative terms as appropriate, the impact of the grant.

2. **Budget**

Using the Humanities Access Grants sample budget (PDF) as a model, complete the Humanities Access Grants budget form (MS Excel). Instructions for the various budget categories are available on both the sample budget and the budget form. Both the sample budget and the budget form are available on the program resource page.

If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs, submit a copy of its current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File). (See the instructions for this form in the Application Checklist at the end of this document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to the form, explaining a) that the applicant institution is not claiming indirect costs; b) that the applicant institution does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement; or c) that the applicant institution is using the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each subgrant or subcontract in excess of $25,000).

You should submit your budget in a font of at least eleven points. Your budget must be free of mathematical errors.

BUDGETARY NOTES

NEH policy on endowments: Endowments created with NEH grants should be reported on IRS Form 990, Schedule D, Part V (PDF), and are restricted to the uses defined in the grant budget as approved. Grantees may make changes in the purpose of the endowment only in consultation with NEH. NEH is guided by Section 6 of the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) in assessing proposed changes in purpose.

OMB Uniform Administrative Guidance Audit Requirements

An endowment fund created with an NEH grant may subject the grantee institution to federal audit requirements. Subpart F of the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Guidance document states that a nonfederal entity that expends $750,000 or more in federal awards during the entity's fiscal year must have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year. A nonfederal entity that expends less than $750,000 in federal awards during its fiscal year is exempt from federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in §200.503 (Relation to other audit requirements). Nevertheless, grantees must make records available for review or audit by appropriate officials of the federal agency, pass-through entity, and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The cumulative balance of federal awards for endowment funds that are federally restricted are considered federal awards expended in each audit period in which the funds are still restricted. (In other words, an endowment that includes $750,000 or more in federal funds will trigger an audit requirement in every year of the endowment's existence.)

3. **Project director biography and (if appropriate) job descriptions**

The project director is the person primarily responsible for implementing the humanities activities described in the narrative proposal. Attach a **two-paragraph version** of this person's biography as an appendix to the application. You should also attach job descriptions for any positions being supported by the Humanities Access grant.

4. **Letters of commitment and support**

Include in an appendix **no more than five** letters of commitment and support from institutional administrators or funders, participants in or beneficiaries of the proposed humanities activities, partners, experts in the field, or staff involved in carrying out the humanities activities. Letters from the applicant's Congressional representatives or Senators are not appropriate for a Humanities Access grant application.

5. **Supplementary materials**

Prepare a PDF document of no more than twenty pages that contains examples (flyers, brochures, other descriptive materials) of current and previous activities from collaborating and partner organizations. Include a table of contents. Use the document's first page to explain briefly the relevance of materials to the proposal.

All such materials must be part of the digital application package submitted through Grants.gov. Do not mail or otherwise deliver materials to NEH.

How to Submit your Application

You must submit the application to Grants.gov. You can find links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package on the [program resource page](). Be sure to read the [document]() (PDF) that explains how to confirm that you successfully submitted your application.

Deadlines

You are welcome to contact the Office of Challenge Grants to seek advice about preparing the proposal. **Draft proposals are optional, but applicants are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this preliminary review.** A draft should include the full narrative section of the application and the proposed budget; send it by e-mail attachment to [challenge@neh.gov](). Please submit this document no later than April 6, 2016. NEH staff may not be able to review drafts submitted after that date.

Grants.gov must receive applications on or before May 4, 2016. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp applications after they are fully uploaded. Grants.gov will not accept applications submitted after that date.

Humanities Access Grants timeline

April 6, 2016	Target date for submission of draft proposals for comment by NEH staff.
May 4, 2016	**Receipt deadline** for applications.
December 2016	Notification of awards.
May 1	Annual date after notification by which the grantee must submit certification of the gifts required to claim the year's installment of federal funds.

V. Application Review

Applications are evaluated according to the criteria listed below, and the narrative should clearly address these criteria.

1. **Significance of humanities activities and impact**

   How will grant funds strengthen and improve the understanding of the humanities on the part of youth, communities of color, and/or economically disadvantaged populations? Are the planned activities well-thought-out? Is their intellectual quality high?

2. **Appropriateness of resources and plans**

   Is the institution, through its mission, personnel, governance, facilities, and resources, capable of sustaining outstanding activities in the humanities? What evidence (such as letters of commitment and support) is there of sufficient institutional and community commitment to the plans? Are the planned grant expenditures (federal and nonfederal combined) described clearly and in detail?

3. **Fundraising and evaluation strategy**

   Is a sound fundraising plan in place? How will the institution assess the impact of this grant?

Review and selection process

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman on grants. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process

and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available [here.](here)

VI. Award Administration Information

In early December, approximately seven months after the application deadline, NEH will notify applicants by e-mail whether they will be offered a Humanities Access grant. Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents by e-mail in December 2016. Award documents will identify the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements that pertain to successful applications. The Grant Management section of the NEH website outlines all the responsibilities of award recipients, including anti-lobbying restrictions, in great detail. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their applications by sending an e-mail message to challenge@neh.gov.

VII. Points of Contact

If you have questions about the program, contact:

Office of Challenge Grants
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8309
challenge@neh.gov

If you need help using Grants.gov, refer to

Grants.gov: www.grants.gov
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html
Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)

VIII. Other Information

Privacy policy

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the grant application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

Application completion time

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that the average time to complete this application is fifteen hours per response. This

estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at guidelines@neh.gov; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

☐ **Verify and if necessary update your institution's Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM).** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.

☐ **Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with Grants.gov.** Complete at least two weeks before deadline.

☐ **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The program resource page on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. (Note that Grants.gov tells you to download the "application instruction" as well as the "application package." The "application instruction" is this document, so there's no need to download it.) Alternatively, you can search Grants.gov for this program. The program resource page also has a direct link to the instructions for completing the package.

☐ **Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.**

1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational

2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs

3. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form

4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach the parts of your application as described in the guidelines:

   ATTACHMENT 1: Narrative (name the file "narrative.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 2: Budget (name the file "budget.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 3: Project director's biography and (if appropriate) job descriptions for any positions to be created as a result of the grant (name the file "bio.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 4: Letters of commitment and support (name the file "letters.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 5: Supplementary materials (name the file "supplementary.pdf")

5. Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File)—Using this form, attach **only** a copy of your institution's current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an agreement). (See the Grants.gov instructions for institutional applicants, which are available on the program resource page, for additional information.)

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). We cannot accept attachments in their original word processing or spreadsheet formats. If you don't already have software to convert your files into PDFs, many low-cost and free software packages will do so. You can learn more about converting documents into PDFs here.

Upload your application to Grants.gov. NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on federal holidays), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to support@grants.gov.